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A bipartisan group of American lawmakers is calling for a review of alleged financial ties between the new head of a key intelligence agency and the Saudi government.

Chas Freeman, a former ambassador to Riyadh who was recently appointed chairman of the National Intelligence Council, served as the head of a Saudi-funded think-tank, the Middle East Policy Council.

"The [think-tank's] board of directors includes Dr. Fuad Rihani, a consultant to the Saudi Binladin Group - a multinational construction conglomerate and holding company for the assets owned by the bin Laden family," read a letter from the office of Mark Kirk, a Republican congressman.

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"We ask you to fully investigate Amb. Freeman's past and current relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - both personal financial disclosures and the list of all contributors to the Middle East Policy Council across all years that Amb. Freeman drew a salary from the foundation - and report back to Congress on any potential conflicts of interest," read the letter, which was co-signed by nine other members of the House of Representatives.

Freeman is known in Jewish circles as a fierce critic of Israel's policies in the Palestinian territories. His appointment has drawn strong opposition from Jewish organizations.

"Freeman's past writing and statements with regard to the Middle East cast serious doubt on his fitness for such an important and sensitive position," the Republican Jewish Coalition said in a statement.

"He apparently holds the view that Israel is the source or cause of all the suffering, terrorism, and instability in the region and that a so-called 'Israel Lobby' induces American governments to adopt policies not in keeping with American interests."